

S E C R E T

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THE NORTH ASIA COMMAND

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1952 - 1956

DO NOT DESTROY

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Controlled by : FE DivisionDate prepared : Spring 1969Written by : W. Lloyd George**S E C R E T**

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Group (JTAG) came to a disastrous end with more serious and lasting consequences. In North China, not too far from the presence of Chinese Communists, a guerrilla-intelligence team was in trouble and an airplane rescue operation for the principal agent was planned. The commander of JTAG, [] informed the newly established NAC that the then available ground pick-up system would be employed. This called for a pass over the ground team's location by the JTAG C-47, the dropping of gear which the ground team would set up quickly, another pass with a lowered hook to seize a strong line stretched between two stakes, and a rapid climb by the plane to lift the attached Agency agent to safety where he would no longer be subject to capture and interrogation for his knowledge of base headquarters information. JTAG recognized the danger of entrapment but considered the risk minimal. It did not prove so. The plane was shot down on its second pass and John T. Downey and Richard Fecteau, two Agency employees under Department of the Army civilian cover, were captured. Presumably the pilot and copilot did not survive.

(b)(3)

For a time in [] it was not known, even though suspected, what had happened. NAC's new air maritime unit, headed by [] sought and gained the

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(b)(3)

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S E C R E T

support of General "Jake" Smart of the Far East Air Force. The Air Force laid on a sea search between Japan and Korea under the pretext that an Air Force plane had possibly gone down on a trip between the two land areas. This was supported by a carefully devised flight by a second C-47 which, by suddenly diving below radar coverage, appeared to have crashed into the sea. The search lasted most of a week without, naturally, direct results. During that interval, Japan headquarters of FEC, [] waited in trepidation for any word of survivors of the rescue operation. Finally, almost exactly two years later, in November 1954, it came when the Chinese Communists announced that Downey and Fecteau had been captured and would be tried. This they were and sentenced to prison, Downey for life and Fecteau for 20 years.* Thus for well over a decade they have been [] in China as subjects of endless and fruitless negotiations and diplomatic conversations in Warsaw whenever Chinese Communist representatives agree to talk with the American Ambassador there. To

(b)(1)
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*For further details on this operation, see CS Historical Paper No. 87, The Civil Air Transport (CAT) A Proprietary Air Line, 1946-1953, vol. III, tab J, The Pick-Up Operation.

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